



Trade?



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Chapter 1 by Hailey Thomas

What many don't know about Rumpelstiltskin is that he was actually a she. She was beautiful and was always a good guy and... Okay, who am I kidding? I was evil. MUHAHAHAHAHA!!!!

Well, actually, the stories about me are pretty precise. I make magical deals with people to obtain things from them. But hear me out, I'm actually a good person now. I have stopped making too many deals and I now live in the real world. I would sometimes travel back to the fairy tale realm, but I don't really think I'm wanted there anymore. Man, Humpty Dumpty was loved more than I thought...

Anyways, I make the occasional trade with stupid drunkards and drug addicts, but come on!! Their lives are already messed up, am I right? Heh heh... Am I right...? Perhaps there was the rare exception, but that doesn't really happen anymore.

Well... it happened once. Just once. A man dressed in a snappy business suit marched up to me in the forest. "I need a deal," he said with a gruff voice. He handed me a picture of a younger man. He was a pretty boy with brown, fluffy hair and bright, blue eyes. The businessman told me to get creative with his death. Of course. I asked for something in return. He grinned almost

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I studied the stack of cash for a second before thinking about what to do. Not many people know this, but we never cast spells - we CALL them from some all-mighty spirit. I forgot all the details and history or whatever, but that is exactly what I did - call up a spell. A vial of blue liquid appeared in my hand with a puff of smoke. The liquid was designed to slowly kill a man until finally, after a year or so, they die completely.

I had called up the siren's spell that made me seem beautiful to others before heading to 322 Story Road. It was easy to seduce Cole, enter his home, and pour the potion - poison - into his coffee. When I left, I thought that my business with the strange man in the forest and Cole Hunter was over, but I was sadly mistaken.

About two months later, a hooded figure came to me in the same forest, stumbling around like a drunk. This is great, I thought to myself, another loser who wants a deal. He must have drank a little too much, since he bumped into me and gave me a hug.

"Oh, what a sad life I have," he sang with slurred words in a foreign tune, "For a sad little bird came to me. She told me she came for the company, but she left with a laughter of glee!" The song made no sense, but he backed away from me and dropped to his knees, bawling, "I'm going to die soon! The old witch told me, yes, she said that I would! Oh, how miserable I am!"

He hurled at my shoes and I stumbled back in disgust. He then pulled his hood back and wiped his mouth on his dirty sleeve. At first, he was unrecognizable, for he had bloodshot eyes, a small stubble of a beard, and dried dirt and blood splayed across his cheeks and lips. I had to study him for a bit before recognizing who he was. Gasping, I whispered, "Cole? Cole Hunter?"

His head whipped to face me. "You seem... familiar..." he murmured, his eyes almost shut. "I... Yes, you do know me... from somewhere," I said, gazing at his once beautiful blue eyes. The color was drained from his face, and his eyes were a pale grey. I almost felt sorry for him if my greed hadn't taken over. Think of the cash, I thought, think of the cash. I brushed my fingers through the pocket on the inside of my coat, feeling the crisp dollars crinkle between my fingers. I hadn't used a single note, for no particular reason. Perhaps I was saving up.

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The sickness!" Screeching, he pulled at my pant leg, looking up at me with pathetic, pleading eyes.

"Hey. HEY!" I yelled, yanking my leg back from his filthy fingers. "There is no way to fix your illness," I told him. He began to cry again, slumping over like a pouting child. "But," I continued, trying to cheer him up, "I can make the symptoms stop. Mind you, you will die in the end, but at least you won't suffer!"

He looked back up at me again, his expression changing. "What do you want in return?" he asked, almost giving up. I could tell that he didn't have much, so I stroked the cash in my pocket, thinking. "My last, er, client gave me quite the exchange. Here, this is free of charge." I couldn't believe what I was doing, but I called up the best antidote that I had to offer.

He snatched it from me hastily, gulped it down, and waited. Slowly, color returned to his face, his eyes turned brighter, and he looked less tired. He hugged me again, this time without delusion. "Thank you," he whispered, silently weeping. I didn't know what to say, so I just hugged him back. It felt pretty good to do the right thing.

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